



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
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**Item No. 12.2.1**  
**Executive Standing Committee**  
**November 24, 2022**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Regional Council

**SUBMITTED BY:**



for

Jane McKay-Nesbitt, Chair, Women's Advisory Committee

**DATE:** November 17, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Gendered Approach to Zoning Bylaws

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**ORIGIN**

November 3, 2022 meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee, Item 9.2.1.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

**Women's Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference**

Duties of the Committee

6. The Committee shall advise Council, through the Executive Standing Committee, on matters related to women as follows:

- a) receive and review municipal policies, priorities and decisions using a gender lens, for items directed to the Committee by Council or a Standing Committee of Council, or on its own initiative with direction from the Executive Standing Committee, and to make recommendations;
- b) advise on mechanisms to engage and empower women to fully participate in the political process at the municipal level;
- c) advise on mechanisms to promote community leadership development for women in the municipality; (d) provide information and resources about women's gender-based issues to Council, including the use of Gender-Based Analysis Plus; and
- d) advise and make recommendations about strategies designed to achieve the objectives of the Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive Standing Committee request a staff report and recommendations for ultimate consideration by Regional Council:

1. Examining how proposed by-law changes may be consistently reviewed from a gendered lens; and
2. Reviewing how existing zoning by-laws may adversely impact the safety of women and gender diverse individuals in the HRM area.

## **BACKGROUND**

While developing their 2022 Work Plan, the Women's Advisory Committee agreed to address issues impacting women in the HRM.

The Women's Advisory Committee has received numerous presentations and updates from staff related to public safety issues in the HRM. The Committee noted how a staff report requesting this information reinforced HRM's commitment to public safety and gender inclusion.

## **DISCUSSION**

Women's Advisory Committee members expressed interest in forming a recommendation related to consistent application of gender-based analysis in bylaw development and review. The Committee considered former presentations, updates and discussions around public safety in HRM and approved the motion outlined in this report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No financial implications were identified.

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

No risk consideration identified.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Women's Advisory Committee is comprised of nine citizen members and two Councillors. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Request for Committee consideration form from Haneen Al-Noman

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by:       Catie Campbell, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 782.641.0796.

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## Request for Women's Advisory Committee Consideration

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Agenda Item</b><br>(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least 5 working days prior to the meeting) | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Added Item</b><br>(Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon at least one day prior to meeting) | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Request from the Floor</b> |
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**Date of Meeting:** November 3, 2022

**Subject:** Gendered Approach to Zoning Bylaws

### Motion for Women's Advisory Committee to Consider:

That the Women's Advisory Committee recommend that the Executive Standing Committee:

Request staff report(s) and recommendations for ultimate consideration by Regional Council:

1. Examining the negative gendered effects of restricting commercial business's hours of operation in certain areas and how to minimize such effects;
2. Examining how proposed by-law changes may be consistently reviewed from gendered lens; and
3. Reviewing how existing zoning by-laws may adversely impact the safety of women and gender diverse individuals in the HRM area.

### Reason:

Zoning by-laws affect the safety of women and gender diverse individuals. Lighting specifically is known to make individuals feel safer at night in public spaces, especially women and gender diverse individuals.

A comprehensive zoning and lighting strategy is pivotal to both perceived and real safety of women and gender diverse individuals. Organizations like Oxfam have conducted research on the importance of lighting for individuals. Other research on gender-transformative programming exists and the Women's Advisory Committee urges the use of these helpful resources.

Moving forward, the Women's Advisory Committee believes that prior to a change in zoning by-laws, especially in residential areas, it is vital to review the change from several lenses, among which is a gendered lens that takes into account women and gender diverse individuals. Therefore, amendments to zoning by-laws should be gender-sensitive and implemented with input from gender-diverse individuals.

**Outcome Sought:** That Council applies an intersectional gender lens to identify and eliminate street safety concerns for diverse women, girls, non-binary, and gender diverse people and to adopt an inclusive method of policy making.

*Haneen Al-Noman, Member of Women's Advisory Committee*

